

Opening Statement
Ranking Member Grijalva
Legislative Hearing
April 18, 2012

Thank you Chairman Bishop for holding this hearing. You're certainly keeping us busy.

I also want to thank you for working with me and Congressman Horsford to get quick consideration of his legislation, H.R. 696 – the Lyon County Economic Development and Conservation Act

Less than a month into his new role as a Member of the Congress, Congressman Horsford met with me to request that we prioritize this legislation.

I'm glad we're able to consider his request so quickly, and I look forward to hearings on other bills sponsored by democratic members of the committee, including my own.

I am also grateful for a chance to talk about public land grazing.

While Congressman Labrador's legislation addresses one issue related to public lands grazing –the backlog of permit renewals -- it fails to take on the larger issue of below-market grazing fees.

I have a chart here – that compares the cost of grazing a cow on federal lands with the cost of feeding a cat or dog. The federal government charges \$1.35 per month to graze a cow on federal lands. In contrast, feeding a retriever costs about \$24 a month and a cat set you back about \$8 a month.

IF we are going to consider legislation that waives NEPA and extends the tenure of grazing permits, we should have the courage to review the formula for grazing fees.

Idaho, the home state of Congressman Labrador, charges \$12 - \$14 per month to graze on state lands.

In Arizona, we charge \$8-9 per month. Washington State charges \$12 a month, Nevada \$12.50, and California over \$16 per month.

We often hear from the majority that the States do a better job of managing their lands – and in this case I might agree. They definitely do a better job of making sure their taxpayers get a fair return on the use of their state lands.

I also have questions about how this legislation squares with radical proposals to turn over management of federal land to the States.

Just last week Skip Brandt, a Commissioner from Idaho County Idaho told the Committee that Congressman Labrador's forest legislation was the first step of turning over all federal land in Idaho to the state.

Certainly public land ranchers have a view on how these proposals might impact grazing permits and grazing fees.

I also want to thank Dr. Clait Braun from my hometown of Tucson, Arizona. While he's not my constituent, we're from the same town and I appreciate that he made the effort to travel all the way to Washington, DC.

I make the trip far too often, and I know how long it can be, especially on short notice.

Dr. Braun makes a strong argument regarding the shortsightedness of the NEPA waivers in H.R. 657, and I look forward to his testimony.

Thank you all for testifying today, and I yield back my time.